

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the present amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

This amendment cancels claims 1-10 without prejudice or disclaimer and adds new claim 11-23.

New claim 11 is similar to previous claim 4. New claim 11 overcomes the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph rejection on previous claims 1 and 4. Additionally, new claim 11 has removed the word "approximately" from the subject matter of previous claim 4.

New claim 11 is allowable over Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin, taken singularly or in combination. New claim 11 recites that an inside diameter of a cylindrical center part of the metal ring corresponds to an outside diameter of the bearing shell. Webster defines "corresponds" as meaning similar, analogous, or equal, or closely matched. Webster's II, New College Dictionary, 1999. None of Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin teach or suggest an inner diameter of a cylindrical center part of a metal ring that corresponds with an outside diameter of a bearing shell.

Specifically, Pazdirek et al. appears to teach that strengthening element 26 has a cylindrical first portion 28 that is covered on both sides by thermoplastic material of the housing 12. (Pazdirek et al., Col. 3, lines 62-67, and Fig. 2). Thus, Pazdirek et al. fails to teach or suggest that an inside diameter of strengthening element 26 corresponds to an outside diameter of ball cap 36.

Bergstrom fails to describe the relationship between retainer 6 and bearing 18. However, with reference to the drawing of Bergstrom, it is evident that an inside diameter of a cylindrical portion of the retainer 6 does not correspond with an outside diameter of the bearing 18. The inside diameter of the cylindrical portion of the retainer 6 in Bergstrom appears to be narrower than an outside diameter of bearing 18. Thus, Bergstrom fails to teach or suggest this recited feature of claim 11 and claim 11 is allowable.

Claims 12-19 depend from claim 11 and are allowable for at least the reasons set forth with regard to claim 11. Claims 12-19 are similar to previous claim 2-3 and 5-10, respectively.

Claim 14 recites that the cylindrical center part of the metal ring ends in an area of an equator of the joint ball. Claim 14 is similar to previous claim 5 less the word "approximately." None of Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin teach or suggest a cylindrical center part of a metal ring ending in an area of an equator of the joint ball. Thus, claim 14 is allowable.

New claim 20 recites a ball-and-socket joint comprising a joint pin having a joint ball. The ball-and-socket joint also comprises a bearing shell for supporting the joint ball of the joint pin. The joint ball is rotatable and, to a limited extent, tilttable relative to the bearing shell. A joint housing supports the bearing shell. The joint housing has an opening for receiving the bearing shell. The ball-and-socket joint further comprises a metal ring having a cylindrical

portion. The cylindrical portion of the metal ring protrudes from the opening of the joint housing and forms a passage receiving the bearing shell. An inside diameter of the metal ring comprises a guide for engaging and receiving an outside diameter of the bearing shell and for guiding the bearing shell into the joint housing. The metal ring also has a radially inwardly bent end segment for securing the bearing shell within the joint housing.

Claim 20 is allowable over Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin, whether taken singularly or in combination. Claim 20 recites that the cylindrical portion of the metal ring protrudes from an opening of the joint housing and forms a passage receiving the bearing shell. None of Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin teach or suggest a metal ring protruding from an opening of the joint housing and forming a passage receiving a bearing shell. Thus, claim 20 is allowable.

Additionally, claim 20 recites that an inside diameter of the metal ring comprises a guide for engaging and receiving an outside diameter of the bearing shell and for guiding the bearing shell into the joint housing. None of Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin teach or suggest this recited feature of claim 20. Thus, claim 20 is allowable over Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin.

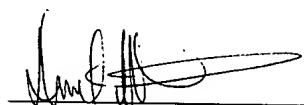
Claims 21-23 depend from claim 20 and are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Additionally, claims 21-23 are patentable for the specific limitations of each claim.

Specifically, claim 21 recites that the metal ring includes a radially outwardly extending flange portion that extends into and is embedded in the joint housing for anchoring the metal ring within the joint housing. None of Pazdirek et al., Bergstrom, and Morin teach or suggest a radially outwardly extending flange portion that extends into and is embedded in the joint housing. Neither Pazdirek et al. nor Morin teach or suggest a radially outwardly extending flange. Bergstrom fails to teach or suggest that the radially outwardly extending flange extends into and is embedded in the joint housing. Thus, claim 21 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,



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